

SPECIAL NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATI

REPERCUSSIONS OF A UNILATERAL DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE BY SOUTHERN RHODESIA

Approved for Release

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Submitted by the

DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

Concurred in by the

UNITED STATES INTELLIGENCE BOARD

as indicated overleaf

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

13 October 1965

Subject: Site 7.

REPERCUSSIONS OF A UNILATERAL DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE BY SOUTHERN REODESIA

NOTE

This estimate is primarily directed to the few months following a unilateral declaration of independence by Southern Rhodesia, though some longer range estimates are made.

CONCLUSIONS

A. We believe that for the next several years at least, political and economic sanctions would not dislodge white rule in Southern Rhodesia and that effective military intervention from any quarter is highly unlikely. Rhodesia's white minority government would probably be able to maintain internal security following independence; it would be unlikely to undertake serious economic measures against neighboring African states unless severely provoked. (Paras. 22, 20, 16, 6-7)





- B. African frustrations over Rhodesia's ability to sustain itself would cause recurrent difficulties for the West in the UN and African forums, and bring down new pressures to take stronger measures against Rhodesia. (Paras. 9-10, 15-19, 21, 24)
- C. The situation might lead to severe strains between Britain and the African states in the Commonwealth and a few of the latter might withdraw. (Para. 18)
- D. The probability that the West will be unable to resolve the Rhodesia issue to the satisfaction of the Africans will provide opportunities for Communist propaganda. While Western influence will suffer a considerable setback, the West will, however, retain an important presence in Africa, and Africans will continue to look to the West for the bulk of their economic, technical, and other assistance. (Paras. 20, 22)

DISCUSSION

I. BACKIFROUND

1. A decision by the government of Southern Rhodesia to cast aside its remaining colonial ties and declare independence would provoke an intense emotional response throughout Sub-Saharan Africa, and create a new and troubling issue for the West on the world scene. Although

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Modesia has been virtually autonomous since 1923, the UK has withheld full independence because the 220,000 Rhodesian whites have been unwilling to provide ironclad guarantees of political advancement and eventual majority rule for the territory's four million black Africans. The whites' emsperation with Britain for maintaining Rhodesian colonial status has increased sharply as most of Africa has become independent. At the same time, black Africans in Rhodesia and elsewhere regard UK and Western attitudes towards Rhodesian independence under a white minority as a test of Western intentions toward Africans generally.

II. THE SITUATION AND PROSPECTS IN RHODESIA

2. Prime Minister Ian Smith's Rhodesian Front (RF) Party won a crushing victory in the May 1965 parliamentary elections by campaigning for the continuation of political domination by the whites. The whites, of course, constituted the overwhelming majority of those who voted. Although the Front's leadership is drawn largely from its most conservative wing, the party reflects the determined mood of the great bulk of the white community, which is convinced that the Africans are incapable of administering their affairs, and that the Africans' own welfare, as well as the interests of the whites, can be secured only under white rule. They are confident that the West will soon acknowledge the justice of their argument that black African governments are inherently unstable and rapidly coming under Communist influence.

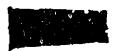


- 3. The black Rhodesian nationalists are badly divided and constantly bicker among themselves over personal and political differences. The major black nationalist movement, Joshus Nkomo's Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU), and the rival Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) are poorly organized and ineffective, with most of their leaders either in detention or in exile. Activities by ZAPU and other nationalists in exile have been ineffective, only partly because they lack bases in contiguous areas. The nationalist movement in general has thus far failed to attract the firm support of African urban workers. Moreover, the government's effective security system, plus its banning of African parties and banishing nationalist leaders to remote areas in the territory, have limited nationalist activities to minor uncoordinated acts of violence and sabotage.
- fidence in Rhodesia's economy and their belief that independence would assure an inflow of investment and white immigration. The territory has a well-developed agricultural and mining economy, and a rapidly growing industrial sector. Although political uncertainty has limited the flow of investment capital, Rhodesia had a balanced budget and favorable trade balance last year. Tobacco is the most important cash crop and the chief export. It earned over \$110 million in foreign exchange last year, with the UK buying more than half the crop. Although not a purchaser of Rhodesian tobacco, Zambia is an equally important customer; each takes over a quarter of Rhodesia's exports.





5. Indeed, Rhodesia's importance to the economies of neighboring black African states is likely to be a crucial element in their reactions to Rhodesian independence. Salisbury has a hold on Zambia, whose economy, particularly the copper industry, is heavily dependent on Rhodesian electric power, coal, and transportation facilities (see maps). In 1964, 93 percent of Zambia's electric power (most of which is used in the mining industry) was generated in Rhodesia at Kariba Dam or by thermal plants in Zembia using Rhodesian coal. While some alternate sources of coal and power could be developed over a period of time, loss of Rhodesian supplies would seriously curtail Zambia's copper production. Also, in 1964, over 98 percent of Zambia's overseas trade was carried by the Rhodesian railway system. The Kariba power complex and the railroads are jointly owned by Zambia and Rhodesia. But Salisbury has physical control over the power generating equipment and, of course, control over the railroad through its territory. Rhodesia provides employment for some 270,000 foreign African workers, including some 50,000 from Zambia, 150,000 from Malawi, and 70,000 from Mozambique. The loss of the earnings of these workers would have serious effects in their home countries, particularly in poverty-striken Malawi; even the repatriation of some might have a disturbing effect.



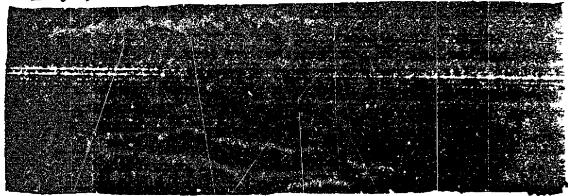


Rhodesian Policy after Independence

6. We believe that Salisbury would prefer not to exercise its leverage over Zembia, and would rather have it as a threat to guarantee the latter's good behavior. Once independence has been declared, the modesian Government would try to minimize frictions with its African neighbors to the extent competible with its own stability and economic well-being. It would seek to maintain a "business as usual" atmosphere. Rhodesian whites are concerned for their country's status on the international scene; after independence they would be even more anxious to attract capital, immigrants, and new markets

The Rhodesians realize that once they had played their trump card -- the capability to cripple-Zambia's cash economy -- they would have seriously damaged their own economy as well as eliminated one of the major factors inducing caution in their adversaries. Nevertheless, Rhodesia may engage in occasional acts of minor economic harassment toward Zambia and perhaps Malawi, just to show that it has the ability to inflict serious injury on these African hostages.

The Rhodesian Government would be able to act tolerantly in these matters, in part because it is unlikely to face a serious internal secrety problem for some considerable time to come. The whites' decision to solve independence would not in itself persuade the black nationalists to resolve their differences, although their African sympathizers would increase their efforts to heal the rift. We look for some increase in mationalist infiltration and acts of violence and sabotage. Even if the mationalists prove able to form some kind of government in exile with Organization of African Unity (OAU) encouragement, we foresee no early emergence of a threat-that could not be handled by Rhodesia's efficient 5,100-men police force supported, if necessary, by the armed forces.*
Salisbury would be unlikely to apply drastic economic retaliatory measures against neighboring African states unless it was threatened by a serious insurgency based in and supported by those countries.



The Rhodesian Police Force has a Field Reserve of 13,000, about half of whom are whites, plus a Special Reserve of about 12,500 which has little training. The army has an actual strength of 2,500 regulars (all officers are white as are about 40 percent of the enlisted personnel). There are in addition 7,200 white Territorials who have some training. The air force has 1,200 men and six operational squadrons; five of which are suited for an internal security role.

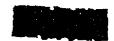






V. PROBABLE REACTIONS BY PORTUGAL AND SOUTH AFRICA

- 12. Portugal does not welcome a crisis over Rhodesian independence and the uncertainties it brings, particularly because it inevitably focuses attention on Mozambique and Angola. Lisbon's inclination is to remain inconspicuous. However, Portugal would probably be willing to allow part of Zambian traffic which normally transits Rhodesia and Mozambique to use the route through the Congo (Leopoldville) and Angola.
- 13. Nevertheless, Portugal identifies its basic interests with those of the white-dominated regime in Salisbury, and it cooperates in security and intelligence operations with Southern Rhodesia and South Africa. Portugal would not support UK or UN economic sanctions; indeed, Portugal would quietly facilitate Salisbury's efforts to evade them by providing access to international markets and giving some financial assistance.
- 14. Like Salazar, Prime Minister Verwoerd would be apprehensive over the consequences of Rhodesian independence. He has done what he could to dampen Rhodesian expectations of South African support, and there is





virtually no chance of a merger with Rhodesia. However, South Africa would prefer to see a white-ruled buffer state in Rhodesia for as long as possible. South Africa would not join in UK or UM economic sanctions against Fhodesia; on the contrary, it would provide an alternate means of access to the sterling area and might help market Rhodesian emports in the event of a boycott. Should Saliabury become pressed, Pretoria would almost certainly extend loans and credits and, if required, arms and military equipment.

VI. THE UK'S POSITION

15. The UK faces an extraordinarily cruel dilemma in determining its response to Rhodesian seizure of independence. London recognizes that African emotions run high on this issue, and that British, and to a degree Cormonwealth, prestige in Africa is involved. On the other hand, the British economic stake in Rhodesia is large, many white Rhodesians still have close family or personal ties in the UK, and any British government would be reluctant to employ extreme measures against their "cousins." The UK has both publicly and privately ruled out military action against the white regime. London would therefore seek to devise measures short of military action but sufficiently harsh to

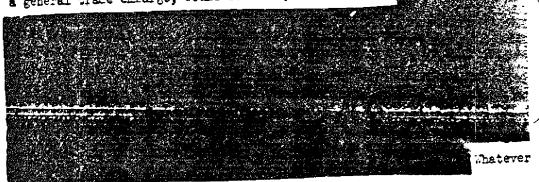
move an independent Rhodesia towards guaranteeing a greater political role to the Africans.



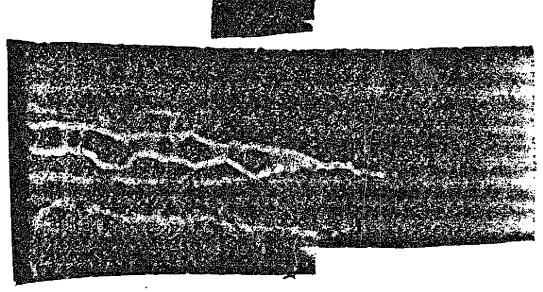
16. It will be very difficult and perhaps impossible for Britain to devise a combination of political and economic measures which would have the desired effects. Prime Minister Wilson has already said that unilateral independence is "treasonable," and if it takes place, the British plan to dismiss the Salisbury cabinet and to call on all other countries to deny aid and diplomatic recognition.

the British would also resort to economic sanctions. A number of punitive measures, e.g., removal of Commonwealth preferences, freezing any remaining sterling belances, and exclusion from the sterling bloc, could be taken without adverse effects for the hard-pressed British economy. The tougher sanctions, e.g., a tan on Rhodesian totacco or a general trade embargo, would be costly to both sides.

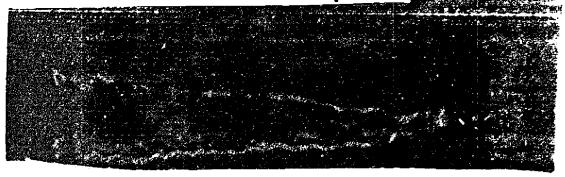
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the UK decides to do, however, we estimate that neither Portugal nor South Africa would support London against Salisbury and, in these circumstances, the economic consequences for Rhodesia would be significant but not decisive. The next Rhodesian tobacco crop will not be marketed until mid-1966; therefore, a tobacco boycott could not have a significant effect before that time.



18. Meanwhile, the UK will attempt to head off crimical African reaction by taking the initiative in the UN. If Rhodesien independence is declared, Britain will propose resolutions calling for UN economic sanctions along lines parallel to those which Britain is ready to impose unilaterally. But it will be very difficult for the British to retain the initiative at the UN, for few Africans would be satisfied with economic measures once they begin to prove ineffective



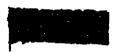
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France, West Germany, Japan, The Netherlands, and the US) to cooperate in economic sanctions. While such governments would find it difficult to reject such appeals, particularly if embodied in a strong UN resolution, the ability of most countries to control their importers and emperters is seriously limited, as the UK knows from its own embargo experience. Therefore, while other Western countries would join in international indignation against Salisbury, and seek officially to be helpful, they would probably not prevent access to supplies and markets.

VII. THE COMMUNIST STATES

opportunities for political meddling at little risk or cost. The Communist powers would engage in propaganda in and out of the UN, would beat the anti-colonialist drum, and would urge the Africans to right their grievances. They would offer support and encouragement to Rhodesian exile groups, and would show themselves willing to supply some arms and training for subversive and insurgent operations. The Chinese, in particular, would see in the situation an opportunity to advance their hopes to infiltrate southern Africa. As the frustrations of Rhodesian black nationalists and their activist supporters grew with the resistance of the Rhodesian Government to pressures, they would probably accept, if not welcome, Chinese and other Communist support. Revertheless, the Communist powers





are unlikely to play a decisive role, partly because the weaknesses of the Rhodesian nationalists, e.g., the lack of military forces and contiguous base areas, would make it difficult for the Communists to bring these assets to bear.

VIII. THE UNITED NATIONS

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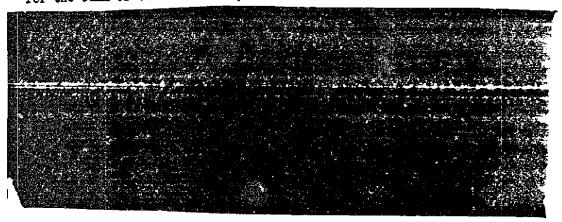
Probably by the UK. Even if the British are able to retain the initiative at the UN for a time, they will from the very beginning come under strong and repeated pressures for stronger measures. The African states themselves can take few practical steps other than to increase their aid to Rhodesian exile nationalist groups. The African countries, however, will use CAU and Afro-Asian meetings to prod the UN to enact more severe resolutions and to keep the issue active. Over the short run the Africans, nevertheless, will probably moderate their criticism of the British as any UK and UN sanctions are applied. However, their patience would scon be exhausted if, as appears likely, these sanctions prove ineffective.

They would then call more urgently for international military intervention.

IX. THE CUTICOK

22. It seems highly unlikely that African demands for military intervention would receive effective support from the major powers. For the next several years, at least, the white regime in Salisbury is not

likely to be dislodged except by military intervention. Thus it appears that the Rhodesian issue would take its place as an unresolved, if recurrent, item on the UN agenda. Despite strongly-held anti-colonialist attitudes, the Africans would be forced to live with Rhodesia, as they have in similar situations which are beyond their power to change at present, e.g., Angola and South Africa. This situation might endure until the Rhodesian nationalist movement could secure power through its own efforts, or until there were a general shift of power to the Africans in southern Africa. If this proves to be the case, Western influence in Africa will suffer a considerable setback. The West will continue, however, to maintain an important presence in Africa, even in those countries most deeply concerned in the status of Rhodesia, and Africans will continue to look to the West for the bulk of their economic, technical, and other assistance.





X. INPLICATIONS FOR THE US

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24. The US lacks sufficient political leverage on the parties concerned to be a decisive influence on the Rhodesian question, though it could assist the UK morelly and materially. The US could, of course, deny diplomatic recognition to an independent Rhodesia. The US could also join UK and UN economic measures against Salisbury, but we have estimated that they are unlikely to be effective. US trade with Rhodesia is only one-sixth that of the UK, and US direct investment there amounts to only \$56 million.

In any event, the US would share in the opprobrium directed at the West by Africans. The Rhodesians are concerned about US public opinion, though not so much as to give up newly won independence or to yield political power to the black rajority.

